

REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action dated March 8, 2005. The period for response should be extended to September 8, 2005, by virtue of a concurrently filed petition for extension of time.

Independent claim 19 has been amended, both to address formality objections and to more clearly distinguish over applied art. Dependent claims 20 and 21 have been amended to conform to the language of the revised independent claim (and to correct dependencies). Unless specifically referenced in a traversal of an art rejection below, it is believed that revised claim language only provides improved grammar or clarity and as such does not narrow the scope of any amended claim.

Care has been taken to avoid entry of new matter. It is believed that the revised claim language finds clear support throughout the original description and drawings. For example, claim 19 has been amended to recite a head operating status detector, a head operating status signal generator, and a head operating status signal decoder. The head operating status signals are transmitted by the rotary transformer, and the control signal generator generates the control signals based on a result of discrimination of the head operating signal decoder. Support for these claim recitations appears in the original specification, for example, at page 18 lines 14-25, page 19 lines 8-13, and page 24 lines 2-14.

Prompt favorable reconsideration of this amended application is requested. Specific issues raised in the Action are addressed below.

The Examiner noted the inaccurate dependency of claims 20 and 21 from cancelled claim 1. By amendments above, Applicants have revised claims 20 and 21 to depend from claim 19. The objections to the phrase "plurality of magnetic recording head" and to the spelling error "ins"

have been addressed above by appropriate amendments to the relevant paragraphs of claim 19. Withdrawal of the formality objections to the claims is respectfully requested.

The other issues raised in the Action related to allegations of obviousness over cited patents. First, the Action rejected claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,369,534 to Han in combination with U.S. Patent No. 5,065,259 to Kubota et al. The Action also rejected claim 21 over the combination of Han and Kubota et al. (hereinafter Kubota), further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,517,369 to Takeuchi et al. (hereinafter Takeuchi) and U.S. Patent No. 5,260,843 to Ohtsuka et al. (hereinafter Ohtsuka). These rejections are traversed. In particular, Applicants submit that the applied combinations do not satisfy all of the requirements of revised independent claim 19 and therefore do not render any of claims 19-21 unpatentable.

In the basic rejection of claim 19 (e.g. last two lines of page 3 of the detailed Action and first three lines of page 4 of the detailed Action and), the Examiner recognized that Han does not teach that the stationary transformer is provided with an information signal decoder that discriminates the information signals or a control signal generator that generates control signals based on discrimination of the information signals. Both art rejections are founded on the position that Kubota teaches a decoder and responsive control signal generation, with regard to discrimination of “the information signals.” Even if modification of Han to discriminate information signals and use the discrimination to generate control signals is obvious, the modified apparatus would not satisfy the requirements of the amended claims.

It is respectfully submitted that Kubota discloses a decoder for decoding image signals. In particular, the portion of the Kubota patent cited in the rejection (column 15, line 66, to column 16, line 14) teaches decoding of digital data DA, DB, DC. The apparatus of amended

claim 19 includes a head operating status detector that detects operating conditions of the magnetic heads, and a head operating status signal generator that generates head operating status signals based on the output of the head operating status detector. The stationary drum is provided with a head operating status signal decoder which discriminates the head operating status signals; and the control signal generator generates the control signals based on the discrimination of the head operating signal decoder. Addition of an image data signal decoder from Kubota, to the device of Han (alone or with the further Takeuchi and Ohtsuka patent), would not result in a device that includes a head operating status detector, a head operating status signal generator and a head operating status signal decoder, as now recited in independent claim 19. The allegedly obvious combinations of Han with Kubota and Han with Kubota, Takeuchi and Ohtsuka therefore would not meet all of the requirements of claim 19 or dependent claims 20 and 21. Applicants therefore submit that claims 19-21 patentably distinguish over the applied combinations and that the art rejections should be withdrawn.

Upon entry of the above claim amendments, claims 19-21 remain active in this application, all of which should be free of formal objection and patentable over the art applied in the Action. It is submitted that all of the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, this case should now be ready to pass to issue; and Applicants respectfully request a prompt favorable reconsideration of this matter.

It is believed that this response addresses all issues raised in the March 8, 2005 Office Action. However, if any further issue should arise that may be addressed in an interview or an Examiner's amendment, it is requested that the Examiner telephone Applicants' representative at the number shown below.

To the extent necessary, if any, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

MCDERMOTT, WILL & EMERY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Keith E. George". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

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